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Balt Sun P. 2A
 Date 27 July 88

Carlucci ready to tour Soviet defenses, but without knowing precise itinerary

By Antero Pietila

Washington Bureau of The Sun

WASHINGTON — On the eve of Defense Secretary Frank C. Carlucci's departure tomorrow for Europe for an unprecedented tour of Soviet military facilities, several details of his four-day program remain unknown.

"He will go out on the Black Sea, but we have not heard the details as to whether that's going to be on a combat vessel or whether that's going to be on a ferry boat. We just don't know," a senior Defense Department official said yesterday.

Despite such last-minute uncertainty, "an important process has begun," according to Robert H. Legvold, director of Columbia University's Harriman Institute.

In eight months since the Soviet Union's chief of staff first visited Mr. Carlucci at the Pentagon, high-level contacts between Soviet and American military leaders have become so institutionalized that "I would be stunned if this would not be continued during the new administration," Mr. Legvold said. "This is very important for both sides."

On his way to the Soviet Union, Mr. Carlucci and his entourage will stop first in neighboring Finland for talks with that neutral country's military leaders and its president,

"We think this is a step-by-step process that requires that we avoid notions of euphoria."

DEFENSE OFFICIAL

Mauno Koivisto.

The defense secretary's party will reach Moscow Aug. 1 and will stay in the Soviet Union until Aug. 4. It will then fly across the Black Sea to Turkey, a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and return to Washington Aug. 8 via the Azores Islands.

The high point of Mr. Carlucci's Soviet program is expected to be seeing a Blackjack bomber at an air base near Moscow. That bomber is the Soviet Union's equivalent of the B-1 strategic bomber, which Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, the Soviet chief of staff, saw during his recent visit to the United States.

Mr. Carlucci is also scheduled to tour the Frunze military academy in Moscow, see an exercise by the crack Taman division and visit the Black Sea fleet's headquarters in Sevastopol. That unit is the Soviet counterpart of the U.S. Sixth Fleet in

the Mediterranean.

Surprises during the visit are not excluded, sources said. When former Defense Secretary and CIA Director James R. Schlesinger was in Moscow some months ago on government business, the ~~British~~ flew the ~~amateur ornithologist to a bird sanctuary near Moscow~~. On the way, the helicopter passed over a highly secret ABM missile installation, according to a participant.

Mr. Carlucci's tour of Soviet military facilities comes nine years after the U.S. and Soviet chiefs of staff had their first peacetime meeting, during the 1979 Vienna summit. Such meetings were to be conducted on a regular basis but fell a victim to superpower tensions.

President Reagan and Kremlin leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev have resumed regular contacts.

"We think this is a step-by-step process that really requires that we avoid notions of euphoria or notions that somehow a shaking of hands and appearing before the camera is a substitute for a stable military balance," the senior Defense Department official said.